

NED R. MCWHERTER MONUMENT COMMISSION

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Monument Commission Selects Renowned Tennessee Artist

McWherter Likeness to be Captured in Bronze Sculpture

DRESDEN, Tenn. – The Ned R. McWherter Monument Commission today announced the selection of renowned Tennessee artist Russ Faxon to produce a bronze statue that will serve as a permanent tribute to the former Tennessee governor.

“We couldn’t be more pleased to have someone of Russ’ caliber to undertake this project,” said long time McWherter friend and commission chairman Terry J. Oliver. “It’s important in a project like this to capture not just the likeness but also the essence of a person, and Russ has proven himself to be an exceptional sculptor with other well-known works of art.”

Faxon, a native of Missouri, was raised in Bowling Green, Ky. He attended Memphis State University and later received a bachelor’s degree in Art Education from Western Kentucky University. After teaching in the Metropolitan Nashville School System in the 1970s, he moved to Italy, where he studied the fine art of sculpture and bronze casting.

His works have been showcased in various galleries across the country and are held in numerous private and corporate collections. Some of his more famous local works include the Minnie Pearl and Roy Acuff statue produced for Opryland USA, the Korean War Memorial at Legislative Plaza in Nashville and the Chet Atkins statue also located in downtown Nashville. Faxon resides and practices his craft in the historic town of Bell Buckle, Tenn.

“To say the least, it is an honor and privilege to have been chosen to create this sculpture of one of the most progressive, accomplished and beloved governors in the state’s history,” said Faxon. “He is one of the finest men and representatives for the people that this state has known. My hope in creating this sculpture is to reflect his thoughtful, decisive, creative and endearing spirit in the love he has for his community, the state of Tennessee and the nation.”

The commission is currently undertaking fundraising efforts to support the production of the life-size bronze statue. The Weakley County Commission has authorized the project and placement of a monument at the courthouse in McWherter’s hometown of Dresden.

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In keeping with McWherter's request that no public funds be used for the project, the monument commission is currently undertaking fundraising efforts in partnership with the Tennessee FFA Foundation. Tax deductible contributions can be made payable to the Tennessee FFA Foundation, Inc. in care of the McWherter Monument Fund, P.O. Box 295, Dresden, TN 38225-0295.

The commission is accepting donations and recognizing contributors based on the following levels of giving: Platinum - \$1,000 and above; Gold - \$500 to \$999; Silver - \$250 to \$499; and Bronze - \$10 to \$249.

The process of producing the sculpture and bronze casting is expected to take 10 months to a year to complete. The monument commission plans to dedicate the statue sometime in summer or fall of 2010.

McWherter, a native of Weakley County, served as member of the Tennessee House of Representatives from 1968 to 1987, including seven consecutive terms as Speaker of the House. He served as Tennessee's 46th governor from 1987 to 1995 and championed many public causes including improved public education, transportation, economic development and health care. He has also been recognized for his support of many local service and civic organizations.

For more information about the Ned R. McWherter Monument Commission, visit www.nedraymonument.com or contact treasurer Jimmy Westbrook at 731-364-2118.

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